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ABSTRACT

The principal's role in the process of inducting student teachers is important. This paper functions as a guide to show principals how they can facilitate positive student teacher experience by working to minimize problems. Initially the principal should review district policy with the student teacher, introduce the student teacher to key personnel, and provide a facility tour. The principal is also responsible for supervising placement with the cooperating teacher, verifying that the cooperating teacher is qualified, validating the required number of teaching hours and teaching assignments, and reviewing student teacher participation activities and out-of-class activities. By assuming an active role, the principal ensures proper induction of the student teacher and professional adherence to local school policies and concerns. The guide provides an example of a student teacher's induction schedule. (MD)

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Inducting Student Teachers:

The Role of the Secondary School Principal

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Running head: STUDENT TEACHERS AND THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Abstract

The role of the secondary school principal includes providing proper induction of student teachers into the local school district. A systematic effort to minimize problems confronting student teachers is included in personnel obligations of the principal. Specific responsibilities include reviewing district policy with the student teacher; scheduling meetings with the superintendent, librarian, guidance counselor, and cooperating teacher; reviewing required teaching hours; and overseeing the progress of the student teaching experience. This guide clarifies the role of the principal regarding student teaching experiences.

Inducting Student Teachers:

The Role of the Secondary School Principal

The personnel function of the secondary school principal includes inducting student teachers into the local school system. The professional literature regarding student teachers concentrates on the role of the cooperating teacher and/or the college supervisor. Yet the principal's role in this process has not received significant attention. The cooperating teacher will work with the student teacher on a daily basis, but his/her primary job is a specific teaching assignment. College supervisors will visit the student teacher three or four times at a maximum. By taking a few extra hours the principal can assure proper induction for the student teacher and professional adherence to local school policies and concerns.

While no new theories are presented in this guide, the paper is meant to be a reminder to the principal of his/her role in the student teaching experience. If the principal is not willing to spend a few extra hours to assure proper induction for student teachers, these students should be assigned to a different school and climate. Working with student teachers is a privilege for the local school district. Student teachers present one source of potential staff for the local district. With proper induction,

the principal can assure the school district of having a quality teacher during the following school year. If the district anticipates no openings in the subject specialty of the student teacher the experience still can be meaningful to both.

Concept of Induction

A working definition of personnel induction includes a systematic effort to minimize problems confronting new personnel to allow for maximum contribution to the system in addition to personal and position satisfaction. When working with student teachers this responsibility lies with the principal. While the obligation rests with the parent institution to provide professional preparation, there must be an individual at the local school in charge of inducting the student teacher experience. This is not necessarily the job of the cooperating teacher. While the cooperating teacher will work with the student teacher on a daily basis, this cooperation is limited mostly to the classroom. There will be three or four visits from university faculty to observe student teacher performance on a given day. However, these personnel may or may not be familiar with the rules, regulations, and policies of the local district. To insure proper induction, the principal needs a written guide. By making sure the student teacher is totally

aware of the expectations of the principal regarding all teachers there will be an assurance of conformity to the wishes of the administration.

Types of Induction

There are several types of induction problems which face the student teacher which can be alleviated by the principal. The first is community adjustment. The student teacher may not be familiar with community geography, economy, housing, government, religious agencies, public safety, health conditions, medical resources, educational resources, law enforcement agencies, recreation facilities, child care, and community planning resources. Since the principal should have a written guide regarding all of these induction adjustments for new teachers in the district at the beginning of the school year the guide can be made available to student teachers.

Position adjustment is important to student teachers. They are going from student to teacher and university to public school. The student teacher may work with one, two, or three cooperating teachers. Each will have different expectations. To help alleviate position adjustment, there must be an awareness of the specific expectations of the role. Each teacher and

school district has unique values, traditions, beliefs, and goals. Awareness of these values will enhance the chance for a successful student teaching experience.

There will be adjustment to individuals and groups within the school. The student teacher will be expected to know and follow the guidelines within the classroom of the cooperating teacher. Student teachers will have to be familiar with groups such as students, teachers, non-certified personnel, parents, and administrators. The degree of success depends upon the willingness of the principal to promote communication between school district personnel and the student teacher.

Personal adjustment includes suitable living accomodations, transportation, and community adjustment. Complete adjustment is not possible unless there is the elimination of anxieties. Much of the responsibility for personal adjustment rests with the student teacher. An effective induction program will make this adjustment easier.

Specific Responsibilities of the Principal

By taking time to review district policy the principal can lay the groundwork for the induction process. At a minimum there could be an explanation of the teacher handbook, teacher in-service materials, and the student handbook. There is no

need to read each and every paragraph of these guides; however, some minimal examination is necessary.

The following items can be clarified by the principal regarding the teacher's handbook: administrative channels, staff work day, mail boxes, duplication of materials, supplies, lesson plans, substitute folders, keys, building security, teacher absences, emergencies, and the school calendar. If the local district has unique policies on any matter relating to the classroom teacher, these must be explained to the student teacher.

Teacher in-service materials are available to the professional staff in writing. The principal should clarify the following in-service materials: staff meeting times, student assemblies, long distance telephone calls, announcements and the intercom, activity guidelines, duties (restroom, hall, parking lot, etc.), general fund accounting procedures, activity fund accounting procedures, field trip requests, teacher evaluations, athletic and activity schedules, general community information, and the master schedule.

Since the student handbook is approved by the local board of education the principal can relay student responsibilities to the student teacher. While many of the following items are available

in written form to students, the principal can make certain student teachers are familiar with board of education policy. Student rules and regulations to be explained include: school hours, visitors, student vehicles, dress code, hall behavior, office phone, vending machines, lockers, corridor passes, school transportation, guidance services, school cancellation procedures, library regulations, bell schedule, alcoholic beverages, smoking, chewing, drugs, activity fund accounts, student organizations, graduation requirements, enrollment and class changes, grading systems, report cards, student attendance, tardies, absences due to school activities, procedures for readmittance, detentions, suspensions, expulsions, corporal punishment, hats, outside building restrictions, and other items as needed.

The principal must take time to introduce the student teacher to the other school administrators, teaching staff, and non-certified personnel. This should be done at a staff meeting and on an individual basis. A tour of the building and grounds is necessary.

By taking charge and making certain the student teacher is aware of local concerns, rules, regulations, and policies the principal can insure smooth transaction from student to

practicing teacher. Also, there can be the assurance the district wishes are being followed.

Meetings with Key Personnel

The student teacher should meet several key personnel. These include the superintendent of schools, librarian, and counselor. The principal should make an appointment with these educators.

Superintendent of Schools

The superintendent of schools will clarify his/her role within the school system and explain the duties of the board of education to the student teacher. Duties of the superintendent can be simplified by a short discussion regarding general supervision of the staff, administration of school board policy, executive duties, personnel administration, and budget. Policy making and appraisal functions of the board of education can be explained to the student teacher. Since the superintendent of schools is the public relations officer for the board of education this opportunity gives him/her the chance to show the progress of the district in all areas of curriculum.
The student teacher can meet key personnel at the central office including the assistant superintendent, clerk of the board, and secretarial help. By visiting with the student teacher the

superintendent of schools can show that the chief administrative officer of the school cares about the student teaching experience.

Librarian

Objectives of the school media center can be clarified by the librarian. Acquisition procedures should be explained to the student teacher. Circulation procedures (check-out and return) should be simplified regarding books, magazines, audio-visual materials, pamphlets, and vertical file materials. If equipment procedure schedules and budget supplements are in writing a copy can be given to the student teacher. A short tour of the library will assure familiarity with use of the media resource center.

Guidance Counselor

By meeting with the guidance counselor the student teacher can have an idea of the responsibility of the counseling center. There is the chance to ask questions to someone other than a school administrator or the cooperating teacher regarding the operation of the school. The principal should make certain the guidance counselor explains required and optional classes, course descriptions, and special programs (early graduation, work study, summer school, etc.). The following services

of the counseling center can be clarified: help in the identification of student interests, help in identification of student skills, career information, and post-high school training opportunities. An experienced counselor will be of great help to the principal during the student teacher induction process.

Cooperating Teacher

Induction Process

Depending upon the nature of the subject specialty the student teacher will be working with one, two, or three cooperating teachers. To keep the student teaching experience meaningful the principal can allow at least one week in all classes for observation (no teaching). Assigned teaching responsibilities can be added slowly. For example, after the first week of observation, the student teacher could be assigned one class for one teacher to teach for one week. Then, after satisfactory progress has been shown, additional teaching responsibilities can be added. Three different teaching preparations are adequate at the conclusion of the experience. A maximum of four actual classes taught by the student teacher (based on a six-period day) is sufficient. The principal should make certain the cooperating teacher stays with the student

teacher during the first part of the experience. A maximum effort is required to assure the cooperating teacher is always at school (not necessarily in the classroom) when the student teacher is in charge of the class. The student teacher is not a paid professional substitute teacher.

Required Teaching Hours

The principal can validate the required number of actual teaching hours by checking with the cooperating teachers at the end of each week. College accrediting agencies recommend ninety hours of teaching, exclusive of observation and participation, be provided for student teachers before they are granted degrees with standard teaching certificates. Individual colleges may require additional hours.

Teaching Assignment

Teaching assignments for the student teacher experience are the responsibility of the principal after consultation with the cooperating teachers. There should be a consensus of which classes are to be taught and for how long. Just as the master teacher schedule is the responsibility of the principal (teachers are consulted), the student teacher assignment is the responsibility of the principal.

Qualifications of the Cooperating Teacher

Only master teachers should be given the privilege of working with student teachers. If the principal does not have a high caliber teacher in the subject specialty of the student teacher assignment, he/she should notify the director of student teachers at the university so the student teacher can be assigned to a different school or district. In general, cooperating teachers should have earned a highly effective marking on their last teacher evaluation, had a minimum five years of teaching experience, a master's degree, and volunteered to work with the student teacher. Cooperating teachers should work with only one student teacher during the semester.

Initial Guidelines

The principal should make certain the cooperating teacher goes over minimum guidelines with the student teacher. These may include: a seating chart for every class, scope and sequence curriculums for every class, lesson plan responsibilities, use of bulletin boards, discipline in the individual class, gradebooks, school inventories and materials, evaluation procedures of the individual teacher, cooperation with co-workers, and supervision (hallway, lunchroom, and restroom). These guidelines will help the student teacher become familiar with

the expectations of the cooperating teacher.

On-Going Class Participation

The principal can review student teacher participation activities with the cooperating teacher. Introductory activities may include: preparing materials for class use, operating projectors and developing teaching materials, assisting individual students, securing resource materials, caring for bulletin boards, arranging field trips, making sociograms, observing other teachers, recording grades and attendance, grading papers of students, giving short examinations, making assignments, studying cooperating teacher lesson plans, describing related experiences to class, making a study of community resources, helping arrange furniture for various activities, and assisting the cooperating teacher in making case studies. On-going class participation activities do not count towards the minimum number of actual teaching hours in the classroom.

Out-of-Class Activities

Much of the teacher's work takes place outside of the classroom. The following list, reviewed by the principal with the cooperating teacher, suggests types of activities the student teacher not only observes; but, whenever possible,

takes an active part: student-council meetings, assemblies, lunch, dances and parties, athletic and activity events, field trips, community youth organizations, parent conferences, teachers' meetings (local, district, and state), parent-teacher individual conferences, home visits, school plant examination, and conferences with non-teaching personnel (nurse, librarian, counselor, principal, and superintendent). Out-of-class activities do not count towards the minimum number of required teaching hours in the classroom.

College Supervisor Visits

Approximately four visits will be made by college supervisors. The principal must communicate his/her professional opinion to these supervisors regarding the progress of the student teacher and working relationship with the cooperating teacher. Strengths and weaknesses of the student teaching experience can be stated in writing.

Schedules

First Day Schedule

The following schedule provides a concrete example for the first day:

8:00 a.m. Student teacher meets with the principal (35 to 45 minutes)

8:45 a.m. Tour of the building (10 to 15 minutes)

9:00 a.m. Student teacher meets with the superintendent (15 to 20 minutes)

9:30 a.m. Student teacher meets with the librarian (20 to 25 minutes)

10:00 a.m. Student teacher meets with the guidance counselor (20 to 25 minutes)

10:30 a.m. Student teacher observes classes the rest of the day

After School: Student teacher meets with the principal to review the day's activities (15 to 20 minutes)

After School: Student teacher meets with the cooperating teacher to review the day's activities (15 to 20 minutes)

After School: Principal meets with the cooperating teacher to review the day's activites (10 to 15 minutes)

Weekly Schedule

Friday

Afternoon: Student teacher meets with the principal to review the week's activities (5 to 10 minutes)

Friday

Afternoon: Student teacher meets with the cooperating teacher to review the week's activities (15 to 20 minutes)

Friday

Afternoon: Principal meets with the cooperating teacher to review the week's activities (5 to 10 minutes)

Final Day Schedule

After School: Student teacher has exit interview with the principal (10 to 15 minutes)

After School: Student teacher has exit interview with cooperating teacher (10 to 15 minutes)

After School: Principal meets with cooperating teacher to review the student teacher experience (10 to 15 minutes)

Summary

The student teaching experience is a period in professional practice during which the student teacher tests and reconstructs the theory which he/she has evolved and during which there is development of a personal style of teaching. This experience provides an opportunity for the student to assume major responsibility for the full range of teaching duties in a real school situation under the guidance of college supervisors and public school educators. The experience presupposes the learning experiences included in all other professional studies. By assuming an active role in the experience the principal assures proper induction for the student teacher and professional adherence to local school policies and concerns.